



JANUARY 2014

Spring Newsletter

From The Director

Spring, a welcome return especially after a frigid, bona fide winter! What first began showing its green face in Feb. may now need a little warm weather teasing for full blush. I suspect that spring may unfold a little more slowly this year. Please stop by and enjoy the abundance of wildflowers in the Arboretum.

Three projects are planned this year; a chestnut tree demonstration plot (see article on page 2), further planting of our Monarch Waystation with many more milkweeds & nectar plants, and the installation of one or two new garden components, as part of the Soil Builders garden in the Little Legs Loop area found in our At Home In The Woods family features design. This educational garden will be designed around the fallen black oak that came down in the derecho summer storm, two summers past, and part of the Rock-n-Roots component of the Soil Builders feature.

Visit: <http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/at-home-in-the-woods.shtml>

A colossal overturned rootball, along with magnificent boulders, cloaked in moss, tell the story of how our soil is kept in place so that forests such as these can thrive. Many visitors, especially young children raring to climb along the trunk laid out upon the forest floor, will have never laid eyes on the complex and powerful root system of an oak tree, and few can resist running their hands along the velvety smooth coat of a moss-covered boulder. Children will learn about soil, roots, microorganisms and that decay is what feeds the next generation of life to sprout from the forest floor. Please join in as a volunteer, donor, or artist to help us create this new garden area.

<http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/volunteer-at-the-arboretum.shtml>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1..... Letter From The Director
- 2 Return of the American Chestnut
- 3 Understories:
Starry Nights at the EJC Arboretum
- 4-6..... Upcoming Events

Throughout 2014!

- *First 25 customers at Plant Sales get 25% off purchases*
- *25th registrations at paid programs are free*
- *\$25 donations qualify for membership in Friends of the EJC Arboretum!*



Jan Sievers Mahon

Return of the American Chestnut

American Chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, a rapid growing, native Beech Family tree once dominated the canopy of eastern forests. Nicknamed The Mighty Giant, this vigorously reproductive and long-lived legacy tree grew straight and tall to heights of over 100 feet, often with little branching for the first 50 feet, making it a perfect lumber tree. In the late 19th century none could imagine what was yet to befall this prodigious mammoth.

By the late 1800s chestnut blight, a fungal pathogen, had landed in the U.S. from Asia, and it was first found in the N.Y. Bronx Zoo in 1904. By the 1950s an estimated four billion trees had died from this fungal disease. This was a significant portion of the forest-- one in four trees -- growing along the Appalachian Mountains from Maine to Georgia, and spreading west to the Ohio River Valley. The huge impact affected wildlife (turkeys, deer, squirrels and bears), farmers, who used the nuts to fatten livestock, and the heavily invested timber industry. Chestnut wood, rot-resistant like oak but much lighter, was used for fencing, telephone poles, railroad ties, home construction, flooring, plywood, shingles, piers and paper pulp. Tannins were also extracted from the bark for tanning leather. And a considerable market in U.S. towns and cities was in place selling roasted chestnuts as a delicacy in the fall and holidays. Like us, Native Americans had eaten chestnuts for ages.

It wasn't until the early 1980s that The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), founded by scientists, declared a mission to restore the American Chestnut tree to our eastern forests. A research farm in southwestern Virginia at Meadowview was established as a breeding ground to develop blight-resistant chestnut trees, and today there are state chapters from Maine to Georgia that have developed over 300 breeding orchards with more than 120,000 chestnut trees. By 2009 TACF announced a first forest planting of the Restoration Chestnut 1.0, a potentially blight-resistant chestnut that has been and continues to be planted, tested, and evaluated in sixteen states.

The EJC Arboretum has joined this effort to help educate the public by planting a demonstration plot this spring with one-year old chestnut saplings to demonstrate and trial three chestnuts together, American Chestnut, Chinese Chestnut, and the TACF's Restoration Chestnut 1.0-- one of many small steps towards restoring the mighty American Chestnut to its place in the forest.

Jan Sievers Mahon



Starry Nights at the EJC Arboretum

The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum, a woodland sanctuary on the James Madison University campus, is a public urban garden and forested greenspace that preserves native plants species, provides opportunities for research, and promotes knowledge of the botanical and natural world for people of all ages.

What is it about the night sky that captures our imaginations? For eons of time, humans have studied the skies, trying to understand the mysteries of the cosmos. What's out there waiting to be discovered, and what drives us to keep pushing the limits of space exploration? If we stand gazing upward at night through leafless tree branches that reach into the darkness above us, what is it that we would hope to see?

Myths of Grecian gods and creatures define constellations and assign them recognizable forms. Legends exist of ancient mariners using celestial navigation for crossing unknown oceans by charting stars, the moon, and planets. Constellation formations have guided humans on ancient treks. American history records in the folk song "Follow the Drinking Gourd," about a constellation we know as the Big Dipper that was sung as a laborer's song among slaves to share a route of escape. A nursery rhyme song for young children expresses the universal human curiosity and wonderment of gazing into the night sky and seeing twinkling stars.

For many of us being able to look heavenward and enjoy a blanket of stars cloaking the vast black expanse has never happened or is at best a memory. Everywhere human activity occurs at night, skies are saturated with artificial lighting, and the beauty of dark skies is lost. Night lighting is so pervasive most people have never enjoyed a true dark sky. That can change! In partnership with the John C. Wells Planetarium at JMU, the EJC Arboretum invites friends and star gazers to the first annual Starry Nights Harrisonburg. Enjoy a program that includes a dark sky guided tour and poetry reading in the moonlight, late night, Friday March 28! Come to the arboretum and follow a guide leading the way through winding paths with stars and a waning crescent moon lighting the forests.

Gail Turnbull



Photo by Ryan Ripley

Upcoming Events

2014

For more information or to make reservations for events, go to the EJC Arboretum (www.jmu.edu/arboretum) or contact us at 540-568-3194. Note that within selected calendar items there is a link to more information and to the registration page for the event. Also, a complete listing of all events scheduled for the next 12 months can be found at the website's Calendar of Events.

● **March 25, 26, 27, 2014, Spring Children's Art Workshop**
4:00 to 6:00 pm, in the *FPEC. The Tues, Wed, and Thurs workshop offers children's education on plant identification as well as basic botanical drawing, all materials included in a \$35 cover charge. Advance online registration needed.

● **March 26, 2014, Birding Workshop**
Wednesday, noon-1:30 pm In the *FPEC, in partnership with the Rockingham Bird Club, an avifauna notable and photographer of Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley avian species Diane Lepkowski, lectures on songbirds to raptors, giving a free annual spring lecture and forum discussion in the *FPEC, noon to 1:30 pm, This workshop partners with guided birding trail walks in April or May.

● **March 28, 2014, Starry Nights Harrisonburg**
8:00 pm, starts at the *FPEC. Friday night dark sky guided tours with the Arboretum Director and Master Naturalists. Talk on night wildlife; workshop on night photography and poetry reading under the stars and star-gazing. For info: <http://jmu.edu/planetarium/starrynightsharrisonburg-page.shtml>

● **April, 2 & 9, 2014, Wildflower Walks**
Wednesdays at 10:00 am, Arboretum Exploration Series Tours with the Arboretum Director, enjoying over 50 varieties on exhibit at the EJC Arboretum. Walks meet at the Pavilion. No advance registration.

● **April 5, 2014, Guided Bird Walk**
Saturday, 8:00 a.m., in the Pavilion. Led by a birding expert, Greg Moyer, in partnership with the Rockingham Bird Club.

● **April 6, 2014, A Latte' Jive, Alzheimer's Benefit 5K Run and Concert** Sunday, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Sigma Kappa sponsors an annual 5k benefit for the Central and Western Virginia Chapter of the American Alzheimer's Association, on the arboretum grounds, "A Walk You'll Remember!" with live music at the 5k conclusion, and runners cool down and enjoy coffee, decaf, tea, and water served free compliments JMU Catering. Automatic rain date April 7 announcement to post on Sigma Kappa website: jmu.sigmakappa.org

● **April 12, 2014, Monarchs and Math Workshop**
Saturday, 10:00 am. In the *FPEC. Free workshop about how Math Matrixes help entomologists study migratory Monarch populations. Register online at the arboretum website.

● **April 12, 2014, Easter Egg Hunt**
Saturday, 11:00 am. Egg hunt will start in the Pavilion, for young children with the Theta Nu Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta, Saturday, per-registration required. Contact the Executive Board of the Theta Nu Chapter to register your child. Cost per child information available at registration at Theta Nu website 30 days before event date.



● **April 18 & 19, 2014, Arbor Day Trees and Native Plant Sale** Friday and Saturday, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm *FPEC. In the prime time of spring, the Arboretum offers a wide selection of wildflowers, contrasting foliage plants like native ferns, with unusual shrubs and trees. To honor those who educate youth, all city and county public school teachers receive 15% off tree purchases presenting a school ID! And/or, on Saturday, the first 25 customers purchasing at the cashier table receive a 25% discount honoring the 25th Anniversary.



Upcoming Events

2014

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- **April 20, 2014, Easter Sunrise Service**

Sunday 6:00 am to noon, at the arboretum on the main lawn. JMU RISE hosts the annual inter-denominational Easter Sunrise Worship Service.

- **April 20, 2014, Campus Cookies Easter Egg Hunt for JMU Students**

Sunday 1-4:00 pm., Sponsored by the Office of Residence Life, JAC card required, JMU students with JAC cards search for hidden Easter eggs holding valuable coupons and discounts to area merchants and a free cookie from Campus Cookies!



- **April 21 to October 31, 2014, Walk-Up Plant Sale**

Beginning in mid-April, and projected to continue until the first hard frost in the region which will be about mid-October. Shop from a selection of usually currently in bloom natives, exotics and cultivars perennials, shrubs, and trees at the *FPEC.

- **April 21 to October 15, 2014, Private Greenhouse Shopping by Appointment**

Beginning in mid-April, and projected to continue until the first hard frost in the region which will be about mid-October. Shop from the entire greenhouse inventory of natives, exotics and perennials, shrubs, and trees, by advance appointment only, with \$50 minimum purchase required. Call (540) 568-3194, or visit the arboretum website to schedule the appointment.

- **April 22, 2014, Earth Day Wildflower Walk**

Tuesday 10:00 am *FPEC, The Director leads a walk highlighting the environmental benefits the arboretum provides its community.

- **April 25, 2014, Virginia Arbor Day Public School Gift Tree Planting Ceremony**

Smithland Elementary school students, faculty, staff and parents gather for an Arbor Day observation and ceremony, to plant a tree at their school and learn about the value of greening Harrisonburg's public school campuses, as the EJC Arboretum grows into its' community. 2014, A new public school hosts this event each year. (Schools can apply to be selected for a tree planting ceremony by emailing the Education Coordinator on the arboretum website Contact Us page.)

- **April 25, 2014, Arbor Day in Virginia**

Friday 1:00 pm, event is the Virginia Native Trees Tour, with the Arboretum Director, at 1:00 pm meets at the *FPEC.

- **April 30, 2013, Tour Celebrating Historic Garden Week**

Wednesday 1:00 pm, the EJC Arboretum celebrates with a tour starting at the *FPEC. Arboretum grounds are open free to public, dawn to dusk. Tours will be led by Jan Sievers Mahon, Arboretum Director and will focus on the arboretum's bulb collection, wildflowers and flowering shrubs and trees. Tours will start at the Frances Plecker Education Center. Preregistration is not needed.

- **April 26, 2014, Wildflower Walk with The Virginia Native Plant Society**

Saturday, 10:00 am, A VNPS docent tour guide and wildflower aficionado, leads this tour starting in the *FPEC.

- **May, 2014, Annual Spring Notable Wildflowers Field Trip**

date and destination to be announced online each spring to a new wild regional location, dress for an expedition to view wildflower species in their natural setting with a Virginia Native Plant Society Member, Arboretum Board Member, or Arboretum Director or as guide. Register in advance. Participants meet at destination. For details call at (540) 568-3194.

**FPEC is the Frances Plecker Education Center, found on the grounds of the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at 780 University Boulevard, Harrisonburg, VA 22807*



Upcoming Events

2014

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- **May 10 & 11, 2014, Mother's Day Carriage Rides**

By twilight 6:30-9:30 pm Saturday evening, and 1-4 pm Sunday afternoon, in the Arboretum. Carriages leave from the *FPEC. Give a special mom a memorable celebration by a carriage ride through the natural beauty of the Arboretum; costs vary per person for adults and children, and per private carriage, phone for cost and to reserve (540) 568-3194 or email.

- **May 16, 2014, Wine and Cheese in the Trees Lecture**

5:00 -7:00 pm Friday, on Ernst Terrace of the *FPEC culinary demo at 5:30 and lecture at 6:00. Lucas Coffee Roasting Company speaks on coffee growing, roasting, and world-wide connections. Register online.

- **May 23 & 24, 2014, Spring Celebration Plant Sale**

9-3pm Friday & Saturday. Wide Selection of plants, shrubs and trees, with Saturday educational activities that may include a lecture, demonstration, ask-an-expert, raffles, live music, and a butterfly release. First 25 customers purchasing at the cashier table receive a 25% discount honoring the 25th Anniversary.

- **June 10, 2014, Storytime in the Understory**

11 a.m. to approximately 12:00 noon monthly program begins in June second Tuesdays, and continues through September 9. Children will develop an understanding of the importance of nature from children's literature selections. Bring a picnic blanket or lawn chairs, and a brown bag picnic lunch for after Storytime.

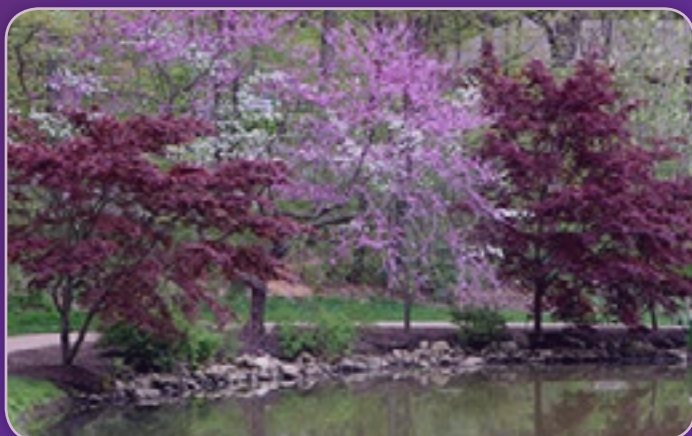


- **June or July, 2014, Summer Children's Art Workshop**

Date to be announced online, 1:00-3:00 pm, Children will learn summer trees and flowers of the arboretum. The workshop offers education on plant I.D. and basic botanical drawing, materials included in a \$35 fee.

- **Mid June through July, 2014, Summer Brown Bag Lunch**

Lecture Series dates and topics to be announced online, at noon, in the Pavilion, Wednesdays except July 4th week, free, no advance registration needed, enjoy lunch and a great topical lecture. Series lecture topics will post to the arboretum website in the spring of 2014.



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Unless noted, all photography courtesy of *Lynn Whitmore*